



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# An Afghan Feast For The Senses

**Afghanistan's pavilion at Expo Milan 2015 simulates a visit and is drawing thousands**



USAID/ ATAR

*A visitor to the Afghan pavilion smells some of the country's famous saffron*

***It introduces them to a whole new way of looking at Afghanistan because most people think of the country in terms of war and other stereotypes***

Heaps of saffron, piles of fruit, baskets of nuts. Afghanistan's pavilion at Expo Milan 2015, offers visitors from around the world a feast for the senses. It lives up to the tagline "amazingly real Afghanistan", welcoming visitors with saffron tea and traditional sweets, the air rich with the different aromas of the produce.

The Expo, which runs till the end of October, is focused on food. This is why the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA), with support from USAID's Afghanistan Trade and Revenue project, created an experience that simulates a visit to Afghanistan.

"We tried to exhibit the tradition, culture, and the products of Afghanistan in the best way so [that visitors] feel like they are in Afghanistan," explains Navid Mohseni, EPAA's general marketing manager.

The Expo, in which some 145 countries are taking part, is busy, but the Afghan pavilion attracts about 2,000 visitors a day. Many of them say they come after reading newspaper accounts or hearing about the pavilion's small restaurant, which offers traditional Afghan cuisine.

Often, it introduces them to a whole new way of looking at Afghanistan. "Most [visitors] were not familiar with Afghan food, and they mostly know Afghanistan by war," says Barialai Nazary, manager of the restaurant.

"From the beginning, the first aspect that has impressed me is the commitment of the government and people of Afghanistan to communicate beyond stereotypes," adds Filippo Ciantia, a director of Expo 2015.